

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 12, 1896, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D. C. Thursday, March 12, 1896. My dear Alec:

I did not write you last night for a variety of reasons, but chiefly I think because I felt blue. I don't know why. Tonight on the contrary I have felt, red!. and I also don't know why. But it's decidedly a pleasanter feeling than the other. To begin with the end of my day, I was at the Geographic Society's reception although I said I wasn't going out in your absence.

I was sitting talking to Aileen and looking straight ahead when Dr. Gallaudet walked slowly past looking me full and steadily in the eyes, just as a dead man might and almost as white. His face never changed, his eyes never left mine until the slow walk had carried him past me and I, well, I went on laughing and talking and it is me I meant it should be and as it is right that it should be, but I cannot help remembering many kindly meetings in days past, when pleasant words from Dr. Gallaudet brightened otherwise stupid and humiliating evenings. I think I am a very weak and mean spirited individual but the kindnesses received came unbidden into my mind and I have to dig down deep into my memory and pull the unkindnessee by main force before me. I wonder whether Dr Gallaudet is looking so pale and ill, or whether it was just the meeting me. I saw his daughter coming before she could have seen me and was busy about something. Once again Dr Gallaudet I think brushed past me but I did not look up and I am not certain it was her.

Mrs. Newcomb came to me in the course of the evening and confided a great secret to me. Miss Newcomb, the last of her daughters is to be married in April. This is a great secret and I have promised 2 to tell no one, but you don't count and beside it must be out soon for she is to be married on the 11th. of April. I could not understand the happy man's name, but Mrs. Newcomb is evidently very much pleased, she came back a second time

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to say that she would be satisfied if Josepha won as good a husband as I. I said I hoped so too.

Well I did have the best time I ever had in a big party. I went alone except for Miss Tisdal whom I chaperoned, and Papa of course was too busy to look after so, but from the first moment to the last I was not left alone a moment. One after another people came up to speak to me, half of them but dimly remembered as many if not more men as ladies. And well, I don't know what got into me. I don't often get high but I did tonight and it was fun. Don't mind Elsie is coming out next year and will regulate me to some safe old dowager back seat. Dr. Simpson escorted Aileen, but he was just as nice to me and staid by me when no one else was around, and Mr Walcott took me into lunch and one man whom I couldn't remember from Adam came up and apologized for hurrying past me at Brentano's the other day as he was late for an appointment. I could not finish talking to one person before another would come up, so it was very nice. Before the reception I dined at Mrs. Stanley Brown's and had a very good time indeed. Mr. Kennan was at one side and somebody else unknown on the other and both were very nice and Mrs Kennan across the table as usual was ready to help me out of any difficulty or start me again. She is always so good to me that way she seems to have me as much on her mind as my own mother could have. Mrs Stanley Brown's 3 house is so pretty and is built in such a lovely way, piece, by piece, a little added year by year as the money permits and the family grows, and it is all planned by them and the woodwork carved by Mr Stanley Brown himself. The latest addition is the new library — such a pretty artistic room and entered so prettily by steps from the bedroom which is turned into a parlour by the simple process of pushing up the bed and drawing curtains before it.

It is Mamma's birthday, but it was not publicly announced as she did not want Mr and Mrs White to know for fear they might be embarrassed. She said, however, she would receive presents in the afternoon when Mrs. White was taking her nap so when my faience came from Boston I telephoned over and received reply that I would be received, in the pantry! Well I ran over in my grey morning dress and I had scarcely begun to open the

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box when Mr and Mrs Gilman were announced and nothing would do but I must go in and help receive them morning dress and all. Next came Mrs John Foster, Mrs Hawley, Mrs Westcott and Mrs Kennan, a regular reception!

Yesterday I dined at Papa's to meet the Russian Admiral Ma-haupi H He was very pleasant and a fine looking man as all Russians are, as nice to me before as after he got from Mamma that I was the wife of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. Can you fancy Mamma explaining that? I saw her and it was funny it seemed to go so against the grain with her to say more than that I was Mrs Bell, Mrs Alexander Graham Bell. He said he knew a Russian lady who had been taught to speak and read the lips by a Frenchman and she conversed rapidly with her husband in French, but she could not understand Russian and she found it difficult to understand him, the Admiral, because of his heavy moustache. He speaks very good English and I am sure his moustache would not stand in the way of my understanding him easily with a little practice. Papa invited me to meet him again at luncheon but I was already engaged.

My little party tomorrow night begins to weigh heavily on my mind because I have telegraphed Charles I would manage without him. I was so sorry for the poor fellow. He went home the other day, so pleased to be at his sister's wedding and today I had a telegram from him saying they had a wedding and a death in the family on the same day. He said he would come back but I thought he would like to stay.

Now I really think I have made up for not writing yesterday. It's one o'clock and I have been up since half past seven and dusted my library and parlour and washed the breakfast dishes!

Ever your own, Please greet the grand Mogul for me.